Required Recommendation Letters

All letters must:

• Be on letterhead and have a valid signature
• Be dated
• Specifically state that the evaluator supervised or taught you and what your role was in the experience

***It is your responsibility to ensure that the person(s) writing your letters include this information. Schools will not accept your letters if this information is not included! It is also your responsibility to determine whether or not any other letter requirements are needed for the specific school(s) you are applying to.

Two (2) Academic Letters:

Science Professor – 1 required
Professor – 1 required

These are to be written by faculty members who have taught you in a traditional lecture classroom setting and assigned you a grade for credit in the course. Letters from independent study, lab, or online/correspondence courses do not meet this requirement. Letters from teaching assistants are not ideal, but may be accepted only when co-signed by the professor who directs the course. These letters should discuss your ability to function as a student and may include, but should not be limited to, such traits as your enthusiasm for the subject, the level of commitment and engagement you demonstrated, the pertinence of the questions you asked, and your ability to work with others in group settings.

Four (4) Supervisor Letters:

Community/Volunteer Service – 1 required
Patient Exposure – 1 required
Research – 1 required
Physician – 1 required

The Community/Volunteer Service letter is to be written by an individual who supervised you as you performed volunteer service. This individual’s title and level of education is not important. Most important is this individual’s ability to speak to the compassion and dedication with which you provided service to others. Additional information about your sincerity, interpersonal interaction skills, motivational and leadership abilities, capacity to work independently, and the level of responsibility you attained within the organization for which you volunteered might also be included.

A physician you shadowed should not write the Patient Exposure letter. It is to be written by someone who supervised you during your actual exposure to patients. Shadowing is NOT patient exposure. They should discuss your exposure experience in addition to your level of commitment toward the field of medicine, the compassion you displayed toward patients, your ability to interact with others, and the pertinence of questions asked.

The Research letter is to be written by a research mentor who supervised your research experience. He/she should discuss your ability to work in a research setting as well as your ability to think critically and solve problems.

The Physician letter is to be written by a physician that you shadowed. He/she should discuss the specifics of what you observed during your shadowing experience in addition to your level of commitment toward the field of medicine, the compassion you displayed toward patients, your ability to interact with others, and the pertinence of questions asked. Persons applying to osteopathic programs should note that some programs require that the letter be from an osteopathically-trained physician. Most allopathic programs do not specify the training background of the physician you shadow, but none will allow time spent shadowing a chiropractor, podiatrist, naturopathic physician, optometrist, etc. Resident physicians also do not qualify to provide recommendation letters.